

There Is No Death

THE V. REV. A. POWER

Reprinted from the Melbourne "Tribune"

MAN shrinks naturally from death. Whilst all other sentient living creatures struggle against death because they have deeply embedded within them the instinct of self-preservation, to man death is something more appalling than it can be to any of the lower animals simply because man can reason about death.

To man with his glorious gift of intellect, his power of looking before and after, the blackness of extinction which death seem to portend is intolerable. To have tasted the light, to have rejoiced in the radiant glory of this dazzling universe; to have seen the beauty of flowers, the fair colors on the hills at dawn, the deep blue of the ocean, the twinkling lights of the starry heavens, the face of laughing children: to have listened to all the endless harmony and music of the great joyous world; to have drunk of the sweetness of life and then to lose it all, to part with it all for ever, to pass into an endless, unbroken night of darkness and unconsciousness, seems a terrible fate from which our nature leaps back instinctively with horror.

Yet how little man knows about death? In spite of all his eagerness to unlock the secret; in spite of all his attempts to pierce the veil, to reach forward and discover what lies beyond, how futile have been his efforts!

Before Christ came man saw his fellowmen marching in long procession down the road that leads to the gates of death: pitilessly, inevitably compelled to follow that road, with no exception. He saw them pass one by one, through those iron gates to a great unknown world beyond, to a land from whose bourne no traveler ever returned to say what had befallen him.

CHRIST'S SOLUTION

Then Jesus Christ came and took up the problem of death. He did not shirk the question. He knew very well that if He wished to administer true comfort to us, He must find a satisfactory answer to the question: "What is death?"

It will not do to shirk it, or to say that we can know nothing of what is awaiting us beyond the tomb; for of all questions this is the most supremely important for us, the one question of all others which we crave to have answered authoritatively by someone who knows.

Consequently, we find Jesus constantly referring to death and the life after death. He reminds us that it will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night, that it finds many unprepared (like the foolish virgins); that we need not fear death provided we fear God; that to face death for a friend is the strongest proof of love; that many of His own disciples would die for the faith; and most of all, He refers frequently to the fact that He Himself must die that through His death He will save the world.

See then what Jesus has done to rob death of its terrors. He makes it the subject of His ordinary discourses, and tells us what death means. To those that love God, death is the Gate to Life. Through the dark portals of death we may, if we please, pass to the possession of that eternal existence and happiness which consists in the vision of God.

In other words Jesus taught clearly, unhesitatingly, authoritatively the immortality of the soul, and told us in what that immortality is to consist, viz., in the perfect knowledge and love of God.

Our faculty for knowing truth will be fully satisfied by contemplating God's infinite perfection of being; and our capacity for loving the good will be satisfied by embracing Him who is infinite excellence.

Moreover, He tells us it is He Himself, who by dying on the Cross secures for us this passage to eternal life. He has actually taken death and transformed it by making it the instrument of the world's salvation.

THE RESURRECTION

Jesus was not satisfied with conveying to us this information as mere speculative truth. He brought home to us the meaning and reality of life after death, and the fact of His own conquest of death, in a very wonderful way. For after He had Himself died, after He, too, had passed through the dark gates of death through which all must pass, He did what no other man had ever done. He came back from the tomb, He returned to tell us what had befallen Him; He rose from the dead to prove that death is not the end of all things, to prove that although He submitted to death, still death was not His master, death could not hold Him in bondage.

In thus bursting the bonds of death, He won freedom for us also from the despotism of the tyrant and solved for ever the mystery of death.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone, the foundation, the central dogma of Christianity. "If Christ be not risen again then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have given testimony against God that He hath raised up Christ, whom He hath not raised up: if the dead rise not again." So speaks St. Paul.

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

The mystery of death had proved an insoluble one to the world hitherto. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle had wrestled with it, but with very unsatisfactory results. Now there bursts upon the world this extraordinary answer of Jesus.

Hitherto death had known no conqueror. All the world's mightiest heroes were forced each in turn to bow down in homage to the tyrant: Alexander, Hannibal, the heroes of mighty Rome, all had passed away and left no tidings of their fate. But now there comes a Conqueror who claimed to have won a victory such as no other man had ever claimed or dreamt of claiming before.

No wonder if men gasped with astonishment. His own Disciples were utterly incredulous when the first news of the Resurrection reached them. "These words"

(says St. Luke) "seemed to them as idle tales." Then gradually the truth forced itself upon them, and they believed that the Man, Jesus of Nazareth, who had died on the Cross, was now alive again, having risen from His bed within the tomb.

A few weeks later Peter the Apostle is out in the streets of Jerusalem boldly proclaiming to an astonished world this startling news, that the Man crucified on Mount Calvary was risen from the dead, and that His Resurrection was the pledge of our own: the guarantee that for us, too, death was not extinction, but merely an incident on the road, a passage from one state of existence to another, higher, better, more perfect, wherein all the nobler aspirations and longings of the soul would be fully satisfied.

A little later again Saul of Tarsus, the bitter opponent of Jesus and His doctrines, was converted by the risen Jesus appearing to Him on the road to Damascus; and the rest of his life Saul spent in telling men about Christ's triumph over death. The Resurrection is the constant theme of his preaching.

CHRIST'S METHOD

We are not concerned here with proving the Resurrection, or refuting attacks made upon it: we are simply explaining Christ's solution of the mystery of death, and showing in what way He brought that solution home to us.

Let us consider Christ's method a little more closely; let us see how did Jesus of Nazareth succeed in so tearing the heart out of this grim secret of death, that His fervent disciple Paul of Tarsus could shout so joyously: "O death where is now thy victory? O death where is thy sting?"

Did Christ take up the philosophical arguments which men had wrangled about in the schools for so long with indecisive results, even as they are wrangling about them still in the universities of the world, outside the circle of Catholic thought. Did Jesus take up these arguments and push them home? Or did He bring forward new arguments, new reasoning, and ask men to ponder on them, so as to become convinced of the immortality of the soul?

Some very effective system He must have employed,

for whereas before Christ came, the civilized world was for ever debating the question of life after death, the survival of the soul, the chances of immortality: and seemed ever incapable of coming to any final and definite conclusion; after Christ came all that was changed, and wherever His doctrines spread and were accepted, all doubt disappeared, and men simply lived for the other world, looked forward with absolute confidence to a life of happiness after death as the one prize worth striving for, the supreme good to be secured at any cost.

MEN'S THOUGHTS TRANSFERRED

Christ, we may say, transferred the centre of gravity of men's thoughts from this world to the next.

Now, how did He do this? Where others failed to convince, how has He succeeded? For that He did succeed in absolutely convincing men of the immortality of the soul is clear to anyone who turns his eyes to the story of Christianity, to the hundreds of millions of men and women whose whole career and passage through life has been lit up and inspired by the doctrine of immortality as taught by Jesus of Nazareth.

His method was different from that of all other teachers or preachers or philosophers whom the world had ever known. His method was one that would have been impossible to any other preacher simply because it rested on the fact that He was Divine. He stated, and proved the statement, that He came a witness from Heaven, that He was God's special ambassador sent to mankind with a message of supreme importance. "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world that I might give testimony of the truth."

OUR SOULS IMMORTAL

Christ appeals to His credentials to show the genuineness of His claim. He asks us to accept His testimony as a witness come from the world of God and of eternity into the world of creation and of time. Then when He has given ample proof of His right to speak, He delivers His message, a message which He brings for the whole

world and for each individual human being, a message which is your message and my message: a communication which it is of overwhelming, incalculable importance for each one of you to listen to, to attend to, to act upon, a message that must penetrate into and fill and illuminate your life, because it is the message that will guide you to God, it is the pilot's directions that will steer you safely to harbor across the stormy sea of time. I repeat His message. It is this: Your soul is an immortal substance destined for eternal life. The price of your soul has been paid by My death. Therefore, attend above all things else to securing its welfare in the world to come.

The visible material universe will pass away. The earth, the moon, the sun, the stars will run their course and cease to be. These myriad fires that now blaze so fiercely in the far depths of space, and may blaze perhaps for millions of years to come, shall finally be extinguished, just as the brightest fire on earth dwindles down as the fuel is consumed. But not so your soul, and its fire of being shall never be extinguished; your soul will last for ever. If you ask what can explain this immortality of life, what will fill up or occupy endless existence, the answer is,—God. Your soul is destined to be occupied with God, to be absorbed in the contemplation of the perfect being and essence of the First Cause of all things, the infinite substance which we call God.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

This then is Christ's answer. This is Christ's method. He appeals to His own authority as witness. All other philosophers and teachers must only argue from created things around them, or from the contemplation and study of the internal universe of their own soul. Philosophy does actually deduce from the study of the soul the fact that it will survive the body, that its present experiences in this extended material universe of matter, are only the beginning of its career, the first steps of the great adventure which we call life or existence. But Jesus Christ appeals to the direct and personal knowledge which He and He alone has of that other world which is at present utterly beyond our reach. He comes to us a visitor from that other world, and claims to speak of it with authority.

When Christopher Columbus returned to Spain from his memorable voyage in 1492, and told his astonished listeners of the new land he had discovered in the far mysterious depths of the Atlantic Ocean, how men hung on his words! The first knowledge of America had reached them, and it reached them through this witness who had crossed the ocean and seen for himself. Before that time there were vague surmises founded on a series of more or less probable arguments, which tended to prove that land must exist across the Atlantic. But no man could speak of that land as an eye-witness until Columbus conquered fear, faced the unknown in his three small vessels, and came back with his message.

Jesus Christ, let me say it reverently, is the great Master Mariner, the Columbus of the spiritual world, who launched forth on the dark mysterious ocean of death that had rolled for ages in inscrutable majesty around man's life. He crossed that ocean and then returned to tell the tale of what lay beyond; came to report to listening mankind of the fair lands that were awaiting us beyond the tomb. Ever since that first great landing of the heavenly voyager on the Easter Sunday morning, when His soul recrossed the bounds of life and uniting itself once more to His body, stood forth a man risen from the dead, "the first fruits of them that sleep," men and women have been listening with awe and reverence and delight to the music of His message.

This, then, is Christ's method. He sets forth His credentials. He offers proof of His mission, He appeals to the evidence that makes it clear that He is a Heaven-sent ambassador, and then He asks us to accept His message and trust His authority for it.

THE CHURCH'S METHOD

Now, you will notice that this is just the method followed by the Catholic Church. She also claims to teach with authority the doctrine of eternal life. She, too, claims to speak as a witness, and she first establishes her right to do so by evidence which appeals to the intellect.

Just as a stranger who comes to you from a friend in a distant country presents his letter of introduction or other documents to establish his identity and prove his

claim to speak with authority: and when you have examined his credentials and found them satisfactory you receive him as a friend, you trust his authority and accept as true what he narrates of things or persons in that distant country; so it is with the Church. She claims to speak with authority about God and the things of God. She claims to teach Christ's truth with the authority which Christ has delegated to her, and she invites all who will to examine the grounds or arguments on which she bases her claim.

THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY

So she speaks to her children even as Christ spoke, clearly, unhesitatingly, authoritatively, of the mystery of death. Oh! the comfort, the happiness of dying in the bosom of the Catholic Church. How tenderly, how wonderfully the Church provides for, ministers to her dying children! How reverently she treats the poor earthly remains when death has taken place! How lovingly she pursues the soul ever beyond the veil with her prayers and supplications.

To one who views them sympathetically the funeral ceremonies of the Catholic Church, the Requiem Mass and Office as they are called, are the most solemn and affecting man can witness. Mother Church weeping over and bidding a last, long farewell to her departed child, is pleading piteously for the soul in that new existence which has already begun for it, begging that the process of its purification may be speedily accomplished.

CHAPLAINS IN THE GREAT WAR

During the Great War one of the vivid facts about the work of Catholic chaplains at the front which struck all observers, was the definite, clear, practical way in which they dealt with death and the danger of death. When the Catholic chaplain knelt on the battlefield or in the clearing station to assist the wounded soldier, his ministrations were not confined to whispering words of earthly comfort, nor merely suggesting consoling thoughts and aspirations, but as a minister of Christ. He brought Christ's super-

natural strength to the soul as it was about to enter on its final passage to eternity.

He administered the Sacraments, the three separate Sacraments which the Church brings to her dying children. He heard the man's confession, and gave him absolution, to cleanse the soul from the stain of sin. He gave to the dying man, thus cleansed in the waters of Penance, the strengthening food of Christ's Body as his Viaticum or provision for the journey.

He gave him the comfort of the last anointing, Extreme Unction, as a special safeguard against the temptations and trials of the last agony.

WHY FEAR DEATH?

Why should the Church fear death? Death is to her the birth to life of her children. Death has become her servant, the instrument of her triumph. Was it not through death her martyred children proved their love for Christ and became like Him in His final sacrifice?

Her keen vision penetrates even beyond the dark portals and catches a glimpse of the glory of her children who are reigning with Christ in Heaven. Day by day in her Mass and Liturgy she reminds us, who are still toiling along the road of life, of those comrades of ours who have gone before and secured the prize which is God Himself.

Again in her ceaseless vigil before the Eucharistic Presence of Christ, the Catholic Church is for ever reminding us of eternity, of the immortality of the soul, of the life after death. When you bend your knee in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, you are kneeling down to honor Jesus Christ risen from the dead; you kneel to honor the Man who conquered death; you are professing your faith in the living presence beside you here in the church of that Conqueror who tore down the black flag of death and flung out His own royal blood-red standard to give us heart and hope in the struggle.

OTHER WORLD REAL

To a Catholic who practices his religion how intensely real are the things and persons of the other world; how close his intimacy, how constant his communing with

Christ and His holy Mother and the other saints, the members of the Church who have died and passed through death to glory. This we see in Catholics of every class and rank and degree young and old, rich and poor, learned and ignorant.

Behold a master mind like St. Thomas Aquinas, the great intellect that grasped all knowledge, spending whole nights in ecstatic adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, absorbed in secret converse with the risen Master: and beside him a baby child like little Nellie of Holy God, weeping to be allowed to receive that same Eucharistic Master when she was only four years of age. Listen to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower of Jesus, prophesying the work she would do when death should have stolen away her saintly presence from earth: "When I die my real work will begin. I will spend eternity in doing good upon earth." See St. Agnes of Rome, the child of twelve years, going laughingly to death, facing fire and torture, rather than be unfaithful to her spouse Jesus Christ.

Everything in the Catholic Church speaks to us of the life after death; her whole system is designed to remind us of death, to prepare us for death, to make death happy and easy for us.

CHRIST'S SPIRIT

Where did the Church learn this spirit? From Jesus Christ her Founder. Once more we repeat, a signal proof that the Catholic Church is in very truth the Church of Christ, is this fact, that she looks at death, deals with death just as He did; that to her as to Him, the individual soul is the supreme treasure, the precious jewel whose safe-keeping is the one important business of life. All her Sacraments, all her ceremonies, all her laws, all her institutions; her anxiety about the proper education of her children; her inflexible opposition to worldly principles and loose moral maxims which fill the atmosphere around her; all her activity, all her solicitude, all her care is for the soul. And the soul is precious because it is immortal, because it is destined for a new and higher existence beyond the grave.

This faith, this belief, this conviction which is grasped

so firmly, taught so consistently, acted upon so courageously by the Church, is the truth she has inherited from Christ, and the safeguarding of that truth against the attacks of infidelity, is the function of the Church on earth.

So when Christ came to solve the mystery of death, He was not satisfied with merely telling us the answer; He was not satisfied with Himself rising from the dead to prove the truth of the answer, but He founded his Church to keep ever alive in the world the memory of what He taught.

CHURCH LIVES ON

Men are born and pass away, human institutions rise and fall and disappear like bubbles on the ocean of time, but the Church lives on. Her memory is long and faithful, and she bears witness in this twentieth century as she bore witness in the tenth or in the fourth or in the first century to the fact that Christ rose triumphantly from the dead and thereby solved the riddle of death. She can tell us that with so much certainty, because she was present standing by the open tomb on Easter Sunday morning and heard the angel's voice announcing the Resurrection of Christ. She knows because she saw the Risen Saviour with wounded hands and feet, but radiant with heavenly beauty coming to His disciples and bidding them touch His hands and feet and wounds in order to convince themselves of His identity.

And that majestic Church that thus stretches her arms across the centuries and links up the first Easter Sunday when Mary Magdalen wept by the tomb, Christ's first worshipper bent low in sorrow and reparation because of the treatment Christ was receiving from a hostile world, with this Sunday of the twentieth century, when you Catholics will also kneel in that same Royal Presence to make your acts of love and reparation for the treatment He still receives from a hostile world, that great Church is ours; is our possession; and to her we owe our gratitude for the good things she has kept for us, for the precious wares she communicates to us; not least of all for that deep conviction that unshakable belief in the immortality of the soul and the life of union with God await-

ing us beyond the tomb, which enables us also to cry out joyfully with St. Paul:

"O! death, where is thy victory? O! death where is thy sting?"

The Problem of Pain

F. WOODLOCK S.J.

Reprinted from the Perth "Record"

CATHOLICS, thank God, understand the solution better than others, for they ever link up the thought of the suffering members of Christ's mystical body with the remembrance that the well-beloved Son of God bore a crown of thorns upon His Sacred Head and that in His agony His prayer spoke of these sufferings as His Father's will.

To suffer and not to be able to refer our sufferings to God's Providence would be indeed to suffer without hope or consolation. If there were no "far off interest of tears" to look for, the tears would be bitter as gall.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Outside the Catholic Church the teaching with regard to suffering is often a doctrine of despair. The muddle-headed metaphysics of Christian Science only applies its anodyne when we have managed to hypnotize ourselves into a disbelief in the reality of pain or sickness—and even of matter itself. The Christian Science disproof of the reality of sickness depends on the absurd assumption that God, the Infinite Good, cannot be aware of evil; but (the syllogism proceeds) only that is real which God knows; therefore no pain or sickness—or sin—has any reality.

There are some 6,000 official apostles of this gospel who are registered practitioners of the cult, and possibly another 6,000 who "practice" without registration, as unofficial "quacks." We are told that over 400 registered Christian Scientist healers are busily at work in 112

towns in England, all engaged in persuading sufferers that their suffering is a delusion. You cannot have a toothache, for you have no "real" teeth! One half-hearted Christian Scientist, caught visiting a dentist, excused herself with the explanation that Christian Science was less effective with regard to teeth than with regard to the specific tissues—forgetting that the specific gravity of an imaginary tooth is not really higher than that of an imaginary lung. Death, despite Christian Science quibbles, does come to them and the members of this weird denomination die like other folk, and die of disease.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

Of recent years the press has been full of accounts of "spiritual healing" services in Nonconformist chapels and even Anglican churches and cathedrals. There has been a good deal of discussion as to the relation of God's will to sickness, and a short while ago, in the *Guardian* newspaper, Bishop Carey, of Bloemfontein, gave his matured thought on the problem.

"Sickness and disease," he tells us, "are to be attributed to the evil will of demons or men. . . . Sickness, disease, and evil are the acts of the enemy. We should therefore be filled with the spirit which resents, resists, attacks all evil—sickness and disease included." He appears to agree with another Anglican Bishop, of St. Albans, who said in Convocation two years ago, in the debate on the report of the commission of doctors and clergy on "Spiritual Healing," that "the whole of the Report was based on the belief that sickness could no more be said to be the will of God than sin."

At a diocesan conference with his clergy, the same Bishop goes into more detail. He is reported as saying:

I believe that disease and disorder and discord in the physical sphere is just as much against God's will as disease, disorder, or discord in the moral or spiritual sphere. I cannot and will not believe that God is well pleased when I lose my temper or am unjust or impatient or cruel or mean. . . . These are all forms of moral and spiritual disorder. I cannot therefore believe that it is right to say, when a human being dies of physical disorder, that "it was God's Will to take him." If I said that I should feel that I had blasphemed the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life.

At a Lyceum Club debate some time ago the present writer heard the Bishop of Kensington declare that it was always God's will to heal the sick and that "God's hands had been tied throughout the ages by the falsely called virtue of Christian resignation." Apparently, a man dying of cancer, saying "Thy Will be done," has by this act of resignation prevented God's healing will from being effective!

The Rev. Studdert Kennedy—flippantly called "Woodbine Willie" in the Army—teaches the same doctrine.

Of course it never was and never could be God's will that a man should die of disease. God's will for the body is health and beauty. . . . Our duty to sickness is to hate and detest and fight it in the name and by the will of God, and the whole energy of our prayer ought to be poured out in aspiration that God's will, which is health, may be done in our body.

DEATH-BED A FAILURE

Here, then, once again we are given a comfortless heresy instead of Christian "Gospel" or good news. Every death-bed is a failure, at least a temporary triumph of Satan over God's will to cure.

The application of this doctrine to practice has led to strange scenes at "healing services" utterly unlike the calm, happy serenity of Lourdes, where the sick pray to be cured "if God sees it to be good for their souls," and where as on the lips of our great Exemplar in Gethsemane, the prayer for the passing of the chalice from the sufferer is always qualified by "not my will but Thine be done." Less than two months ago in East Belfast there was an orgy of hysteria under the name of a healing mission. The report says:

A number of girls collapsed and were laid on the floor, where . . . they continued to tremble, one or two frothing at the mouth. These were regarded as favorable signs. A few of those who collapsed began to mutter in an incomprehensible language, and this evoked fervent exclamations. The mutterings were described as "speaking in tongues," and were regarded as unmistakable indications of Divine presence, etc., etc.

CATHOLIC TEACHING

What, then, is the Catholic truth about the connection between sin and suffering in God's providence? In a sense sickness and death are natural to humanity. A man is of

body and soul; the body develops and then in old age it is naturally worn out, no longer a fit instrument for the soul's activities. The possibility of sensible pleasure seems necessarily and naturally to involve the converse possibility of pain. Instinct and many habits are connected with the experience of pain.

THE EFFECT OF ADAM'S SIN

But in God's "original" design if we may so speak—man was to be preternaturally, miraculously if you will, exempt from sickness and death. Adam's sin threw us back on nature as a penalty, and so "through sin came death." But the plan of redemption through the Cross, while leaving man under this penalty of sin so transformed suffering as to make it in God's present Providence the most fruitful source of sanctity. We are members of Christ, and in most cases the development of our likeness to Christ in the beauty of our souls comes through sharing His sufferings and bearing some of the weight of His Cross. The love of the Father, for Him and for us is manifest in the choice of the Cross and all that it involved. The Saints and mystics have realized the privilege of being with Christ upon a cross. They gloried in it, they developed a longing for suffering, for they realized what it accomplished in their souls. "Aut pati, aut mori" became the aspiration of St. Theresa. There will be, in the long run, and through eternity, indefinitely more happiness for men because there has been suffering, than there would have been had man remained exempt from pain, for it is in the facing of pain that all the best elements in human character have been developed.

A WORLD WITHOUT PAIN!

Picture man in a world where there was no pain or struggle or weariness or fear to be overcome: human beings would be devoid of courage or endurance, of self-sacrifice, of pity. Truly Adam's was a "felix culpa," and God's plan of redemption by the Cross a marvelous design of love and wisdom. He has transformed that which seems the great evil into a quasi-sacramental cause of beauty and holiness and happiness, and He has placed pity in our

hearts and has made "self-pity" the only pity that hardens. By the knowledge of the mystery of the Cross and by belief in the mystical membership of mankind in the Body of Christ, He has elevated philanthropy into supernatural charity.

We are allowed to be Christ-like in helping those who suffer; to do all we can to relieve the sufferings of others is a Christian duty. One day Christ will thank us for our service of Himself in His wounded members. "I was sick and you visited Me"—and helped Me and eased My pains. "When you did it to the least of My brethren, you were doing it to Me," is the final justification of God's loving choice of suffering as the lot of men here below. One day He will wipe away all tears from our eyes—"for death shall be no more." Look at suffering from the viewpoint of eternity and you will be able to face it with courage, and to bear it with resignation—perhaps even with the joy of the saints.

Christ's Last Coming

REV. JAMES MELLET, C.S.SP., APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY

Reprinted from the "Irish Catholic"

IT is significant that the Liturgy of the Church at the close of the Liturgical Year, as well as at its opening in Advent, refers especially to the General Judgment. The Gospel of the last Sunday after Pentecost, the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year, as well as the Gospel of the first Sunday of Advent, gives the prophecy of Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and an account of the General Judgment. The two events are given as one in a form of blended narrative, but it is not difficult to discriminate between the two, as, although similar in some respects, they are quite different in others. In the one case the deicide city would be destroyed; in the other the earth, the seat of widespread wickedness, and cursed on account of Adam's sin, would be burned.

THE TEMPLE

The Temple, the forerunner of the Christian Church, came to an end, the reality replacing what was but the shadow; in the same way the Church Militant on earth would be absorbed on the Last Day by the Church Triumphant in heaven, of which it was the vestibule. Both events are marked by the destruction of the wicked, who in the one case are delivered over to the death of the body, and in the other publicly condemned to the eternal death of the soul.

THE FORERUNNER OF THE END

The end of the world will be ushered in by unmistakable signs proclaimed by Christ. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. When Christ was born into this world, as a pledge of His mission as Saviour, according to His designs there was universal peace; universal war is to presage His second coming, as a sign that the time of mercy has passed and that justice alone is to be meted out to those who have not forsaken the ways of evil. Pestilence and famine, the usual aftermath of war, will everywhere prevail: "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations on account of the confusion arising from the roaring of the sea and waves" (St. Luke xxi, 25). The consternation produced will be so great that men will wither away through fear of the things that are to come. The last phase of the redoubtable cataclysm will be the burning of the earth (see 2nd Epistle St. Peter iii, 10). St. Paul says that: "We know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even till now" (Rom. viii, 22). Not alone did our First Parents bring a curse upon the earth by their sin, but the children of men, down the ages, by an intemperate use of the things of the earth, turned them away from the end for which God had created them—the sustenance and preservation of mankind: "The Lord Himself shall come down from Heaven with commandment and with the voice of an archangel," and will give the signal for the resurrection (I Thess. iv, 15). The mighty trumpet call, commanding the dead to rise

and come to judgment, will be heard by all men. The just will rise glorious, with their bodies shining like the sun similar to the glorified body of Christ. But St. Paul says: "We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed" (I Cor. xv, 51). And so it shall be: "For he that soweth in his flesh of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit of the spirit shall reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi, 8). That is the reason why the damned would fain evade the fatal summons to the bar of Judgment at the last trysting place of all mankind. In wild despair they will cry out to the hills and rocks to hide them from the face of God as well as man. "Rocks, hide us! Mountains fall on us." But all will come perforce to hear their fate. All have known it before, but it is now to be publicly proclaimed in presence of men and angels. Christ will come to the place of judgment "in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty" (St. Matt. xxiv, 30). He will come as the King of the world, and Conqueror of sin and death. Well may the just join with Him in a triumphant chorus that will make the valley ring: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (I Cor. xv, 55.) The wicked, too, who rejected His Kingship on earth and despised the kingdom of His love, will be constrained to pay homage to the sovereignty of His justice, on that day which is called the Day of the Lord—the day of wrath to those that did not fear His justice before it was too late.

THE TWO CAMPS

Then Christ will divide mankind into two great camps—putting the good on His right hand, and the wicked on His left. He warned us that He did not come to establish peace on earth, but the sword, not in the sense that He wished it so, but that this would in reality be the effect of His teaching and His life. It would effect a division and a separation. But all things will then be clarified, and the ways of God to man shown in all their justice and beauty. But it is not alone the Day of the Lord—the day of His justice vindicated and His honor requited; it is likewise the day of the blessed of every tribe and tongue. We are told that the wicked will say: "These are they

whom we had some time in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their lives madness and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints" (Wisdom v, 3-5).

THE GREAT GIFT OF ALMS

If we examine the nature of Christ's Kingdom, it can easily be seen that it is the help we give in alms for the poor which will be particularly extolled that day. He will especially pronounce the judgment of the blessed on this point:—"For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in." And they will ask:—"Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee; thirsty, and gave Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and took Thee in?" And He will answer:—"Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me" (St. Matt. xxv, 35-40).

In this He specially referred to the hunger and thirst of the soul, which only the eternal union with God in Heaven can fully assuage. You can, dear reader, make this capable of realization in the case of many pagans by prayer, sacrifice, and alms. They are God's special poor, whose poverty runs the risk of being eternal. They are imploring you, as the lepers besought Christ, to heal them. Do not refuse to hear their cry, and you will thus assure to yourself—what alone matters in the end—a favorable judgment on the Last Day.

The Prisoner of Love

Reprinted in part from the New Zealand "Tablet"

INGRATITUDE is the keenest of the indignities offered to Our Lord, and He breaks through His sacramental silence to make this known.

From every tabernacle in this country He looks out and sees the most awful sins multiplied in His presence. The horrid cities of the plain have been rebuilt, and the

fetor of their crimes is the incense that goes up night and day before His sacramental throne. But worse than this is the ingratitude of Catholics, who will not take sides with Him, and help Him to roll back this tide of infamy: who will not, in atonement, multiply acts of love in themselves, and lead others to profess the same love.

Alas, it but too often happens that Catholics are found to identify themselves with the world, and prefer worldliness to His cause. Such as these gradually but surely withdraw from the service of God, and find such happiness as they ambition down where the black flag of Satan waves. . . .

And the heart needs fragrance just as much as food and drink. The compelling cares of human life and the damp and mildew of the world tend to make it sordid and bitter; and if some aromatic spices, wafted from a blessed shore, are not daily blown through its opened portals, it becomes a danger and a menace to the soul.

But while those who know not the real constituents of life and the essential issues of human existence, sail to the spicy shores of some earthly Araby for Sabeian odors, the Catholic turns to the Heart of Jesus, and is refreshed by its rosy fragrance.

And there is a thirst from which the heart suffers that cannot be slaked at muddy pools. To satisfy this the atheist points to a desert where there is no water, and the mania of the poor thirsty souls become only more acute.

But the soul of the Catholic turns to the rich fountains of the Sacred Heart, and quenches his thirst on sweeter juices than flowed through the vineyards of Engeddi.

It is the mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to keep us from all evil, to chasten and make us sweet and fragrant even this mortal flesh of ours, and to flood our souls with every pure delight. When the Eucharistic Banquet was first spread in the Upper Chamber on Holy Thursday, the beloved Disciple, at that feast of love, leaned his head upon the Heart of Jesus, and from that day down to this, every devout soul that comes to Him in this Banquet is made rich with the love that is the life of that same Sacred Heart.